CALL FOR MORE RESEARCH INTO TEACHER TRAINING METHODS

This week in a collaborative meeting in London, academics from ICAPE reported the results of research into the role of the mentor in Initial Teacher Training (ITT).

Mentors are teachers who observe and guide trainees as they perform their teaching practices. The mentor reports to the University on the progress and ability of the trainee: fulfillment of the mentor’s criteria for competence is vital to the success of the PGCE student.

But what is expected of the trainee is not always clear. The Esme Fairburn Foundation funded six research projects at British universities to assess the success of various aspects of the mentoring scheme, and their preliminary results were presented in a joint seminar in London on Tuesday.

The Sussex researchers, Pat Drake and Lisa Dart, conducted a range of experiments on subject-specific aspects of mentoring, focusing on the contrasting fields of mathematics and English. In both cases they found that the mentors needed to spend more ‘quality time’ with their trainees in order to be fully effective in their transfer of skills. The practical aspects of classroom management often take so much time that there is little opportunity to discuss the trainee’s approach to the subject.

One of the most important issues that needs to be addressed, according to Pat Drake, is the function of the university and the school in ITT. Their relationship should be complementary, she feels, but there needs to be more clarity in the definition of their different roles before the Government’s proposed ITT reforms are implemented.

The University will confer an honorary Doctorate of Music on Sir Harrison Birtwistle (pictured above) at a special ceremony to be held at the newly rebuilt Glyndebourne Opera House on 27 October 1994. The date of the ceremony coincides with the second performance of Birtwistle’s opera The Second Mrs Kong which receives its world premiere at Glyndebourne this year.

Jonathan Cross, lecturer in Music, who has made a particular study of Birtwistle’s work welcomes the decision to confer the degree. “Sir Harrison Birtwistle is one of the foremost living composers,” he says. “His music has been performed, broadcast and recorded all over the world. Given Sussex’s reputation as a centre of excellence in composition and the study of twentieth-century music, it is highly appropriate that we should be honouring this leading British artist in this way. Birtwistle is sixty this year and with the premiere of his opera at Glyndebourne in October, the timing of this award could not be better.”

Bulletin Photo Competition — £100 in prizes to be won

We can now reveal the prizes for our photographic competition, which have been donated by the printers of the current Sussex undergraduate prospectus, Heanor Gate. First prize is £50, second prize £30, and third prize £20.

The photographs can be colour or black & white prints, and the subject matter can be anything that captures your experience of University life — lectures, research, sporting events, social functions, people, places...

The closing date (3 June) creeps ever closer. Send all entries, which will be returned after the competition, to the Information Office, Sussex House. The list of prize winners and the winning entries will be published in Bulletin before the end of the summer term.
Is 'It' Just A Jazz Thing?

You've either got it or you haven't, but what is 'it'? That's what Paul Hodgson, a researcher in COGS, is trying to find out. Hodgson's doctoral research involves him in computer analysis of the solo improvisation work of Charlie Parker, the celebrated jazz saxophonist.

"I'm not out to create an improvising computer," insists Hodgson. "I'm interested in building a computer model of creativity - I want to know how the creative mind comes up with new ideas. How did the great artists consistently produce works that were considered brilliant?"

Hodgson is in a unique position to carry out this research. He is a jazz saxophonist (with television and festival performances under his belt), and he holds a Master's degree in Information Technology. As a project for this course he wrote the prototype of a program called 'Improviser', which is now a commercial software package combining all the tools of the trade into a mimic of improvisation. It is controllable by the user, and designed to assist the famously difficult learning process.

Difficult as jazz may be, Hodgson feels that within the UK it has been ascribed a mystical obscurity. "In the US there are Professors of Jazz - it's something that is open to academic study. With a lot of hard work, anyone can improvise. It's not somewhere up there in the realms of mystery."

Creative improvisation does, however, require an intimate and fully absorbed knowledge of musical structure - it doesn't come easy. Genius, by definition, doesn't come at all. Charlie Parker took all of the musical grammar he had learned and put the fragments together on the spot, making music that had never been played before. There was no time to pause and reflect - Parker's instinctive creation of complex and absorbing music was, to any disciple of jazz, the work of a genius. But at what level does a virtuoso solo become more than the sum of its parts?

Feeding a new computer program with transcriptions of Parker's improvised work may provide some clues. Hodgson plans to see if a computer can generate consistently good 'improvised' phrases when constrained by the style of Charlie Parker - he believes it could be possible. "If a computer can do it, we have to ask how? Assuming we can work that out, can we then take that information, go to another artist, like Picasso, and see the same thing going on there?"

A model of creativity may be a long way off, but it should be an enjoyable trip. "It's a wonderful opportunity," he admits. "I've already been studying Parker for 25 years, just playing his music. Now I get to study it from the academic viewpoint. And it's definitely improving my playing."

WHAT THE PAPERS SAY...

The heir-apparent to Mr Nelson Mandela, former Sussex student Mr Thabo Mbeki, is to become a vice-president of South Africa it was announced on Sunday 8 May (Daily Telegraph 9 May). If, as widely speculated, Mr Mandela only stays in office for a year or so, "It may not be long before the pipe-smoke which once wafted in Sussex pubs will drift around the reception halls of Tuynhuys, the presidential residence in Cape Town."

A recent letter in the Argus (20 April) which blamed "ultra-left wingers and the Communist leanings" of the University's students for the run-down state of Brighton provoked a response in defence of the students from a J. W. (Argus 29 April). J. W. cites a number of projects in which students have invested considerable energy to improve the lot of the town's less fortunate including "the nightly soup run for the homeless and the setting up of Link Up which involves students working with under-privileged children." J. W. adds that during the summer vacation, "You will find students working in day centres for the mentally and physically handicapped" and concludes that, rather than a hindrance to the area, "Students are the life blood of the town."

Leslie Farrar-Brown
We are very sorry to have to report the death on 20 April of Leslie Farrar-Brown who was closely connected with Sussex since 1964 when he became a member of the University Council. In 1976-80 he served as Senior Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council. He was awarded the Hon.LLD in 1981 and continued to serve on the University Council until 1982. He died at the age of 90 after a long and distinguished life as a lawyer, university administrator, economist and charity administrator. At the age of 65 he embarked on a new career as Director and later Chairman of the Alliance Building Society.
On Top of Popular Culture

On a Thursday night, there are thousands of people who switch on the television to watch Top of the Pops— for most of them it is an escape from their GCSE homework. For Dr Sarah Thornton, it is part of her job.

Thornton is a lecturer in Media Studies. While some academics pore over dusty tomes in the library basement, Thornton reads back copies of New Musical Express and The Face. Her PhD thesis examined youth music cultures, which sounds like a dream topic for a research student. But according to Thornton, it wasn’t as easy as some might suggest.

"By the time I had finished my fieldwork, I was totally exhausted— I actually felt ill," she says. "I had been going out three times a week, late at night, to what were often very seedy places. Sometimes I was physically threatened, even accosted. It was actually very hard work."

Fieldwork consisted of visiting hundreds of different clubs, covering the whole spectrum from retro rock ‘n’ roll to acid house raves. She also conducted interviews with club organisers and DJs, and analysed the media coverage that surrounds the dance subcultures. What she found was an abundance of hierarchies in what was supposed to be a classless culture.

"The media is crucial to these cultural hierarchies," says Thornton. "‘Hipness’ is about being in the know, but to be hip your knowledge can’t be too widely distributed. The media are responsible for that distribution. Music subcultures have a strong sense of their own difference and they are usually intent on defining themselves against chart pop music. Ironically, pop, positioned as the mainstream, is itself a minority youth music."

Undergraduate students are generally quite impressed by Thornton’s research, but she feels there is sometimes a measure of suspicion. "Perhaps they feel that they are losing their sense of ownership. They are being institutionalised; someone in academia is colonising and documenting their culture."

Although she currently has a ‘youth lifestyle’, Thornton can see a time limit on this particular research path. "I still have the consumption habits of a 16-to-24 year old," she says. "I go to films and gigs, I read the music press. At the moment I’m not so foreign to their culture. But there is definitely a horizon... When I turn 30, I’ll start worrying about it."

Announcements

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

For more information on any of these sources of research funding, call the Research Office on ext 3761 (Louise Vincent) or email louisev@admin.

AWARDS FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHERS & RESEARCH WORKERS: 1994/96 edition of this ACU directory is in the Education Library, EDB. Awards for University Administrators & Librarians 1994/96 is in main Library, Quickref.

TOXICOLOGY: EUROPEAN SCIENCE FOUNDATIONS FELLOWSHIPS, 1 to 24 months for working in another European country on a specific joint project. Closing date: continuous for 1-3 months, otherwise (for 1995) 15 October 94.

RESEARCH TRAINING GRANTS for in practice postdocs, may still be available from EC under FPIII in Biomed & Health, Biotech, Agriculture, Environment, Mast, Radiation Protection and Controlled Thermonuclear Fusion.

ALFA: ECLATIN AMERICA EXCHANGE PROGRAMME.
Proposals for networks (of institutions in at least three EC countries plus at least two Latin American countries) likely to be invited around November. Postgraduate exchanges probably in 1996. Register expressions of interest with Dee Burns (3762).

PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF GENETIC ENGINEERING: grants offered by Wellcome Trust, with closing date for preliminary proposals of 16 May.

UNESCO: UK Friends organisation, wishing to persuade the UK Government to rejoin, wants to identify academic staff and departments currently or previously with relations with UNESCO, or interested in establishing relations. Letter and questionnaire available on request.
What’s on...

Lectures, Seminars, Colloquia

Monday 16 May
12.30pm Experimental Psychology Colloquia: Implication of Receptor Subtypes for Understanding the Behavioural Pharmacology of Benzodiazepines. D.A. D'Souza (Scheer), Biology Lecture Room.
2pm Particle Physics Seminar: Modification in Black Hole Physics Induced by String Theory. S. Migone (Paris), PB2A1, MAPS I.
3pm Analysis Seminar: Acoustic Scattering From Simple and Complex Objects. H. Überall (Washington), PB2A2, MAPS I.
4pm Women’s Studies Research Seminar: Social Pioneers or Reluctant Revolutionaries?: Disorganising Gender in Rural Development Programmes in Bangladesh. A. Goetz, Arts D310.
4.30pm Neuroscience Seminar Series: Ion Channels and Behaviour. R. Meech (Bristol), Biology Lecture Room.
5pm Politics Forum: Honour and Shame in the Lebanon. M. Johnson, Arts A71.
5pm Media, Cultural Studies and English Graduate Seminar: My Own Private German: Daniel Paul Schreber and the Schizophrenic Sublime. E. Santer (author, Princeton), Arts D410.

Tuesday 17 May
12.30pm Development in Practice Sessions: The Western Sahara Issue. L. Baali (Chief UK Representative of Polisario), Arts C133. Open to all students, staff and faculty.
2pm Psychology @ Cogs Research-in-Progress Seminar: ‘Knowing’ Self and Other. V. Reddy (Newcastle), PB2C8, MAPS II.
4pm Algebra Seminar: Report on Work by Joyal and Street on Representations of GLn (IFq). G. Wraith, PB2C1, MAPS I.
4pm COGS Seminar: A Neuroaesthetic Analysis of Naked Gun (1.0). B. Katz, PBSC11, MAPS III.

Wednesday 18 May
12.30pm Environmental Science Seminar: Cleaning-Up Contaminated Soil. M. H. Ford-Smith, MS1, MOLS.
2pm Statistics Seminar: Reinsurance. S. Vajda, PB2A2, MAPS I.

Thursday 19 May
12.30pm Inorganic Seminar: Synthesis & Complexes of Phosphine & Selenometh- Macrocyclic Ligands. G. Reid (Southampton), MS1, MOLS.
4.30pm Experimental Psychology Colloquia: Title to be announced. L. Fallowfield (UCL), Biology Lecture Room.
5pm Geography Research Seminar: Arabia of Lawrence: Seven Pillars of Wisdom as Geography. Prof. R. Brookes (York University, Toronto), Arts D610.
5pm Social and Political Thought Seminar: Publicness. D. Castiglione (Exeter), Arts D310.

Friday 20 May
10.15am Cogs Seminar: Title to be arranged. D. Hofstadter (Indiana), PBSC11, MAPS III.
2.15pm SPRU Seminar: The Evolution of Global Satellite Services: the Role of Inmarsat. G. Symeonidi (Executive Vice-President International Maritime Satellite Organisation (Inmarsat)), Room 121, EDB.
4pm Astronomy Centre Seminar: Stellar Coro- nae; Recent Results From EUVE. C. Jordan (Oxford), PB1A7, MAPS I.
4.30pm Philosophy Society Seminar: What is Ethical Internalism Committed To? J. Cassell (Kings), Arts A155.

Lunchtime Recitals
Tuesday 17 May, 1.15pm: Ulrich Heinen (Organ), Chapel. Thurs 19 May, 1.15pm: May Ellie Storey (Oboe), Caroline Tullis (Clarinet) and Olle Watson (Trumpet). Recital Room 120, Falmer House.

Freiburg Student Choir
The Meeting House presents on Sun May 22 at 2pm: Vokal Praxis Student Choir Freiburg. All welcome. The venue is the Meeting House. For further details contact the Chaplaincy Secretary on ext. 8217.

Extremities
Sussex University Drama Society presents Extremi- ties, a play by W. Mastroisimone. The play tells the story of a woman who apprehends the man who raped her and must decide whether to take the law into her own hands. David Land Arts Centre. Fri and Sat 20 and 21 May, 7.45pm. Matinee on Sat 21 May 4pm, £2.50. Tickets £3 (concs £2) from Dome Box Office. Student Union Reception and at the Door.

Book Sale and Garden Stall
There will be a book sale and Garden Stall at IDS (Terrace) from 12am to 2pm, Wed 18 May, to raise funds for Oxfam’s relief effort in Rwanda. Support and contributions gratefully received. Contact Diana Frazer-Smith on ext. 8264.

CCE Saturday Schools — 4 June
Wetland Wildlife of Pevensey: Guided field trip to Pevensey Levels, one of the richest Wetlands in Britain. (Venue: Pevensey).

The Evolution of Hove: A look at the development of Hove from the mid-1800s with Sue Berry, Principal Lecturer in Tourism at Brighton University (Venue: Hove).

Beyond Assertiveness: Choosing and Using Interpersonal Styles: A practical look beyond the basic skills of assertiveness towards an understanding of the influences on our attitudes, feelings and behaviour. (Venue: University).

Fees for all above events: £15 / reduced £10 / minimum £4. Enrol with CCE on 678527.

Small Ads

FOR SALE: VW Polo: Y reg. 39,000 miles, VGC, 2 owners, FSH. Tax and MOT. £1,200. Contact Lisa Norris on ext. 8164 between 9am and 1pm.

FOR SALE: Renault Five: white. C-reg. 50,000 miles, MOT until October, 100% reliable, good stee- rec/jesset. £975 ono. Contact ext. 8477 or 324728.

FOR SALE: Honda CB900 motorcycle. V-reg. new tyres, exhaust, shocks, chain, sprocket, total engine service, 1 month MOT, 6 mts tax. £950 ono. Contact Simon on ext. 8544 or 300058 (eves).

FORSALE: HiFi System: table top Dual CS505, Amplifier Mission Cyrus I, Mission Renaissance Speakers and Sony Cassette Deck. £325. Contact Alex on 677691 or email: A.Ruhle@central.

FOR SALE: First floor Studio flat in central Hove. Separate fitted kitchen and shower. £19,000. Contact Liz on ext. 2579.

FLAT TO LET: Hove near BR station and buses. 1 bedroom, kitchen, sitting room and separate bathroom. Fully furnished. Available from mid-June. £65 per week. Contact Frances Bean on ext. 2583 or 478549 (eves).

HOUSE TO LET: Large family house in Hove to let for August. Contact Celia McNees on ext. 3144 or 775616.

HOUSE TO LET: 4 bed, fully furnished house with garden in Preston Park area from June 1994 (suit professional or postgraduate). All mod cons. Rent £600 inclusive of Coun- tix Tax and Water Rates. Contact 0706 823811 (toll 29/594) or 0273 564183 (after 29/594).

TUITION AVAILABLE: English for foreigner (all levels), German (to intermediate level) given by experienced graduate teacher. £10 ph. Also Mandarin Chinese by native speaker. Contact Judith Land on 475786.

Bulletin

The Bulletin appears on Fridays with copy deadline the preceding Friday. We welcome your suggestions for news, details of events, letters and small ads. Please send contributions to Pauline O'Reilly (editor), Mike Brooks (features) or Terry O'Donnell (What's On) at the Information Office, Sussex House, ext. 8209 or Email: bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.